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ABSTRACT

In 1985, the Michigan State Board of Education revised state policy for reading instruction. The old definition of reading instruction concentrated on skills; the new one highlighted both the readers' role in constructing the meaning of text and the impact of reading experience on readers' textual interpretations. The new ideas for reading instruction implied that teachers would have to change their classroom practices. This book presents the stories of three teachers' reading practices--the changes that they made in light of the new policy and the changes that were they did not make. Data were gathered through interviews with and observations of the three teachers during the 1990-91 and 1991-92 school years and from analysis of state- and district-level data. A conclusion is that learning is a process in which learners' prior knowledge affects what and how they learn. Prior knowledge is an array of experiences, ideas, beliefs, and dispositions that form in unique ways and therefore change, in unique ways, how and what they learn. Policy implementation should be thought of not as a construction of output, but: (1) as a construction of change; (2) in the context of diverse and pluralistic learning styles of teachers; and (3) as an exercise in teaching in the best sense. Finally, the worth of a policy is what teachers learn from it. An index and appendix containing methodological notes are included. (Contains 59 references.) (LMI)

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